

A LETTER to a Noble Lord concerning a late Prophane Pamphlet Entituled, *The Presbyterians Pater Noster, Creed, and Ten Commandments.*

My Lord,

Your vigilant care, and indefatigable endeavours to preserve the peace & welfare of this Kingdom, and the true Protestant Religion in its Apostolical purity; and likewise your active diligence to procure the good correspondence of King and Parliament, have deservedly rendered your Lordship beloved in the present, and to be admir'd in Future Ages.

We are very sensible how the present intermission of Parliament, gives those Plotting Villains that disturb our Israel's Peace great opportunity to poison the people with their Seditious & Scandalous Libels against Church & State; Among which, there lately appear'd that Prophane and Irreligious Pamphlet, Intituled, *The Presbyterian Pater Noster, Creed, and Ten Commandments*; which hath scandaliz'd, not only our Protestant Nonconformists, but even many of the Church of England, tho' for two different Reasons; the former resenting that they are publicly charg'd with such Blasphemous Tenets, and Doctrines of Devils; But the latter are offended that the Sacred form of the Lords Prayer, &c. should be thus Imitated to express such Monstrous Impieties.

As for my part, I am indeed very averse from casting aspersions upon any Christian Sect or Society, to whom in Charity I cannot but allow a Possibility of Salvation, while they observe the Common Rules of Christianity; and am always more inclin'd to make a favourable construction of their Words and Actions, than endeavour to render them odious, or ridiculous to the publick. Yet when I find, that Perverse People do take such advantage of this mildness of our Church, and grossly abuse the Patience of good Christians, I cannot in prudence but think they ought to be describ'd and painted to the world in their proper and natural colours. For this Reason I have highly commended, (and perhaps considerably promoted,) these Two Years past the Zealous Endeavours of some learned Men, who have employ'd their Pens against the Plotting Papists, to possess all honest & Loyal Subjects, with a due abhorrence of their Tenets and Practices; and for the same Consideration, am now as much for opposing the Seditious Fanatics, who have treacherously taken the opportunity to undermine Us on the one side, when they saw Us engaged with the Papists on the other; especially, when I consider this is no new Policy of theirs, but their ancient and usual Custom, since they first appear'd in England, always endeavouring to set up for Themselves, when they find the Protestant Religion in greatest danger of Ruine. Thus in Qu. Elizabeths days, finding the Kingdom threatned with the Spanish Invasion, and in a general consternation at the approach of so Formidable a Navy, they began to besmir themselves, and were then most active in creating Fears and Jealousies in the Peoples Minds, and incensing the Unthinking Multitude against Her Majesties Government; as appears by the then Lord Keeper Puckering's Speech to both Houses of Parliament. Especially, (says he,) *You are Commanded by Her Majesty, to take heed, that no Ear be given, nor Time afforded to the wearisome solicitations of those that commonly be called Puritans, where-withall the last Parliaments have been exceedingly importun'd; which sort of Men, whilst in the Giddiness of their Spirits, they labour, and strive to advance a new Eldership, They do nothing else but disturb the good Repose of the Church and Commonwealth: And as the case standeth, it may be doubted, whether They or the Jesuits do offer more danger, or be more speedily to be repressed. For albeit the Jesuits do impoison the Hearts of Her Majesties Subjects, under a pretence of Conscience, to withdraw them from their Obedience due to Her Majesty, yet They do it but closely, and only in Privy Corners: But These Men do both Publish in their Printed Books, and Teach in their Conventicles, sundry Opinions, not only Dangerous to the Well-settled State and Policy of the Realm, by putting a Picque between the Clergy and the Laity, but also much derogatory to her Sacred Majesty and her Crown, as well by the diminution of her Ancient and Lawful Revenues, and by denying Her Highnesses Prerogative and Supremacy, as*

by offering Peril to Her Majesties Safety in her own Kingdom. In all which things, however in many other Points they pretend to be at War with the Popish Jesuits, Yet by Separating Themselves from the Unity of their Fellow-Subjects, and abusing the Sacred Authority and Majesty of their Prince, They do both Joyn and Concur with the Jesuits, in opening the door, and preparing the way to the Spanish Invasion that is threatned against the Kingdom. And that Learned and Pious Dr. Heylin in his History of the Presbyterians, p. 280. saith in like manner, That the Puritans were then most busie, as well in setting up their Discipline, as in Publishing Railing and Seditious Pamphlets, when the Spaniards were hovering on the Seas with their terrible Navy; at which time They concern'd, (and not improbably,) that the Queen and Council would be otherwise Busied, than to take notice of their Practices, or suppress their Doings; Or rather, that they durst not call Them into question for their Words and Actions, for Fear of alienating the Affections of so strong a Party, as They had rais'd to Themselves. The serious apprehensions of which Mischievous Councils prevail'd so far on Leicester and Wallingham, that They did absolutely Renounce any further Intercession for Them, professing that They had been horribly abus'd by their Hypocrisie; Thus He. And I doubt not, but the same Consideration will, ere long, prevail with those Honourable Persons, who in the last Parliament were so far over-seen, (through the Crafty Insinuations of some designing Republicans,) as to endeavour to Unite to the Unspotted Church of England, such Notorious Sectaries, without Recanting their Errors, or Reforming their Manners; as the Laws of the Land, and the Canons of our Church have deservedly Branded with the hainous Imputation of Schism, and of many Dangerous Practices and Opinions; The same Consideration, I say, will undoubtedly work upon those Honourable Persons, that finding Themselves at last abus'd by the seeming Sanctity, and Real Hypocrisie of these Cansing Religionaries, they will be as earnest for their Suppression in future Parliaments, as in the last they have been for their Toleration. In the interim, My Lord, to give You my Final Judgment of that Pamphlet which makes so great a noise in Town, because some are offended at the Matter, some at the Form thereof; I will offer here a particular account of both, with due submission to Your Lordship, and to all true and Loyal Protestants.

And as for the Subject Matter of this Libel, I have still that Charity for the Presbyterian Party, that I wish with all my Heart and Soul there had not been too much Reason to conclude them Guilty of what is there laid to their Charges. Yet We know very well, when the Devil was let loose among Them in our late Tragical Combustions, Their daily Prophane and Disloyal Actions, gave the world grounds enough to believe, this Cursed Catechism was the real Epitome of their Religion. For tho' Then, as Now, they loudly Clamour'd against the Papists, and Popery was still the great Grievance of the Nation; Yet when They saw Themselves in a Condition to Dispute the Matter with the KING, having Insensibly Cheated Him of His Regal Authority, and thought it now high time to lay aside their Masques of Hypocrisie, and stoutly to attempt the Overthrow both of Monarchy and Hierarchy in this Island, as they design'd from the beginning; They earnestly Courted even the Papists themselves, and with great promises of Reward, invited them to joyn with their Rebellious Parliament against their Natural Sovereign; as appears by Our Royal Martyrs Declaration after the Battle at Edge-hill, in these Words: *All Men know the Great Number of Papists, which serve in their Armies, Commanders and others; the great Industry they have used to corrupt the Loyalty and Affection of all our Loving Subjects of that Religion; the private Promises & Undertakings they have made to Them, that if they would assist them against Us, the Laws made in their prejudice, should be Repealed.*

This,

This, My Lord, is that *Blessed Reformation* of our *Reforming Dissenters*, who would joyn with the *Devil* to destroy the *Pope*; and yet side with the *POPE* to overthrow the *Mitre* and the *Crown*. Their tender Consciences could not digest the *Harmless* and *Decent Ceremonies* of our *Church*, but never scrupled to Rob & Murder their *Fellow-Subjects*, nay, to *Sacrifice the Lords Anointed*, and the *best of Kings*: Which *unparallel'd Villany* the *Super-sancitified Rebels* are so far from detesting or condemning, that to this day they dare openly justify their *Wicked Proceedings*, and lay the whole blame of that *Horrid Rebellion*, either upon his late Majesty, as the first that set up his *Standard*, and began the War against the *Parliament*; or upon the *Papists* both *Foreign & Domestick*, who *Monkey-like* made use of these *Blessed Tools* to act that *Hellish Tragedy*: The *subtle Jesuit* dextrously acting the *Sancitified Elder*, and strenuously *Preaching Rebellion* to the *People* for the immediate *Dismissal* of the *Holy Ghost*. A sufficient Caution for all true & Loyal Protestants, to study the suppressing such *Jesuited Conventiclers*, who are of themselves very prone to *Mischief*; and besides, upon all occasions may be influenced by our *sworn Enemies*, to surprise, and destroy us. But to be brief, upon the whole Matter, I think we have reason enough to believe the chief *Contents* of the aforesaid *Libel*, with very little alterations, are the *Real Principles* both of the *Roman* and *Genevesian Jesuits*, whose Religion we find by experience is *Rebellion*, whose *Faith* is *Faction*, and whose *Practice* is the *Embroyling of Kings and Kingdoms*. But as to the *Form* of the said *Pamphlet*, or the *Manner* of expressing the *Tenets* of our *Jesuited Dissenters*, I know many *Pious & Conscientious Protestants* of the *Church of England*, seem something scandaliz'd, that the *Sacred Forms* of the *Lords-Prayer*, *Creed* & *Decalogue*, are thus *Imitated*, and as they think, *Prophan'd*, and turn'd into *Ridicule*. And indeed, I must confess, at the first blush, it appears very *Indecent*, that *Gods Holy Oracles* should be apply'd to express such *Monstrous Tenets*, so contrary to his *Word & Will*, and without some urgent occasion, is not to be tolerated in any *Christian State or Commonwealth*. Yet when upon second thoughts I consider, that nothing can so exactly delineate, and expose to vulgar capacities, the *Hypocrisie* of wicked men, who under a *Form of Godliness*, commit the *grossest Impieties*, than a *Sacred Form of Words* made suitable to their *Curst Practices and Principles*, I think it not so great a *Crime* as some People would fain persuade us. Besides, I find that in the *Halcyon days* of *K. James*, when the *Protestant Religion* was least infected either with *Popery* or *Presbytery*, the *learned & zealous Dr. Boys*, to possess all *Christians* with a due abhorrence of the *Popes sopperies & Usurpations*, made bold to imitate the *Lords Prayer* in this manner, viz. *Paſter noſter, qui es Romæ, maledicetur nomen tuum; intereat Regnum tuum; impediatur voluntas tua ſicut in Cælo, ſic & in terra; potum noſtrum in cæne Dominica da nobis hodie; remitte nobis nummos noſtros quos tibi dedimus ob Indulgentias, ſicut & nos remittimus tibi Indulgentias; & nē nos inducas in Hæreſin, ſed libera nos à miſeria; quoniam tuum eſt Infernum, & Pix, & Sulphur in ſæculis ſæculorum. Our Father, which art in Rome, curſed be thy Name; thy Kingdom pernally ſignifi- viſh; thy Will be bindred on Earth, as it is in Heaven; give ſes Father. us this day our drink in the Lords Supper; and reſtore us our money, which we gave you for Indulgentias, as we reſtore your Indulgentias; and lead us not into Heriſe, but deliver us from miſery; for thine is Hell, Pitch & Brimſtone, for ever and ever. In his Exposition of the Liturgy, Tom. 1. This Book, My Lord, was Dedicated to that *Learned & Religious Prelate Dr. Bancroft* Arch-bishop of *Canterbury*, & ever since has been *publickly ſold*, & read without the least noise of *Blasphemy* or *Impiety*, for thus imitating the *Lords Prayer*. How then can this *Imitation* be counted now *Prophane*, when former ages knew no such thing? or can it be tolerable when level'd against the *Pope*, but criminal while used against the *Presbyterians*? If so, the fault must be suppos'd to lie in the *Matter*, not in the *Form* of that *Imitation*; For in both cases, if in either, the *Lords Prayer* is equally deprav'd and turn'd into *ridicule*. And then the *Grand Query* must be, whether the *Practical Principles* (for their speculations I leave to Divines) of the *Pope of Geneva*, or of *Rome*, be more dangerous to *Christian Commonwealths*, or in particular to the *Peace and Welfare* of his *Majesties Dominions*? This is a great*

Query indeed, and one that would puzzle the *wisest Jesuit* on either side, to give it a *direct satisfactory answer*. As for my part, I am sufficiently convinc'd, they are both inconsistent with the *Peace and Security* of this *Nation*; and do believe, that as the *Popish Jesuits* were rais'd by the common enemy of *Mankind*, and list'd in his service, the same year the *Presbyterians* first appear'd at *Geneva*, viz. Anno 1535. so both have been since equally destructive of all good Order and Government, and are still the *Grand Missioners of Hell*, sent to embroyl all *States & Commonwealths*, that will not submit their necks to the heavy Yoke of their insupportable Tyranny, as well *Papal*, as *Consistorial*.

The Case therefore being such, and since we find by a cloud of Instances, that the *Presbyterians* and *Papists* are equally bent to subvert our Government, and destroy all opposers, I think we can't in prudence but stand upon our guard, and carefully shift their most plausible pretences, least we find, when 'tis too late, latent anguis in herba: And necessity, which either has none, or breaks all Laws, will undoubtedly allow us to make use of any thing, (though never so Sacred,) to secure our selves against our Capital Enemy, and to warn all *Christians* against their *Hellish Contrivances*. We need not therefore be much startled, that in the said *Pamphlet*, John Calvin is call'd the *Father and God of the Presbyterians*, no more than at *St. Paul's* saying of some Voluptuous Men, that *their Belly is their God*, and their end is Destruction. Phil. 3. 19. For certainly, whose Doctrine any *Sect or Society of Men* do embrace & follow, in opposition to the *Divine Oracles of the Holy Scriptures*, that Person is in effect their God, Idolized by the *Fancy* of such *Curst Men*; As for Instance, the wicked *Muggletonians*; of which *Sect* one lately declar'd in the presence of many Witnesses, that if *Christ and Muggleton* had been now upon Earth, he would sooner believe *Muggleton* than *Christ*. A *Horrid Blasphemy* indeed! yet makes not half that noise in Town, which our *Presbyterian Catechism* has made these 10 days past: So that we may well conclude with the *Apostle*, All seek their own, not the things which are *Jesum Christi*: Phil. 2. 21. Or we must say in imitation of *Christ* himself: *Whoſoever ſpeaketh a word againſt the Son of Man, it ſhall be forgiven him: But whoſoever Blaſphemes againſt the Presbyterians, it ſhall not be forgiven him neither in this world, nor in the world to come.*

To Conclude, I will only tell Your Lordship, we are too much alarm'd by the *Presbyterians proceedings*, and are now more apprehensive of them, (as being more numerous, forty to one at least, and consequently more able, and I am sure no less willing to destroy us,) than of the *Papists* themselves. The *Dismal Tragedy* begun in 1641. is still fresh in our memory; and we plainly see the *Holy Brethren* endeavour to sing the *Second Part* to the same Tune, VVhat means else their continual *Railing* against the Government, their *Vilifying* his *Sacred Majesty*, their *Slandering* the *Bishops*, their *Calumniating* the *whole Clergy*, as *Debaucht* and *Irreligious*; In a word, their *Running down* the *Church of England*, *Clergy* and *Laity*, *King* and *Subject*, as *Superstitious*, and *Popishly affected*; as is express'd in that *Pile* and *Scurrilous Pamphlet*, pretended a *Letter to Leſtrange*; a *Pamphlet*, far more *Prophane*, and more *puniſhable* by our *Laws*, especially as to the last S. than the *Presbyterians Catechism*, or any thing else yet Printed against them. They are grown so Insolent, since the late *House of Commons* was so overpersuaded, as to Vote a *Bill for Repealing the Laws* made against them, that they doubt not but ere long they will get the *Day*, and change their *Schismatical Conventicles* for our *Parochial Churches*. And truly, if the *Divine Providence*, and the great *Wisdom* of those that sit at the Helm, do not prevent it, I am afraid we shall find at long running, that having struggled all this while with the *Papists*, we shall be left at last as a *Prey* to the *Fanatics*; For it's very ominous, that the *Presbyterians* should be so Zealous for the late *House of Commons*, and cry it up as the *Prop* and *Bulwark* of the Government; and that *House* on the other side so much favour the *Presbyterians*, that during the last *Session of Parliament*, those of the *Church of England* were by whole *Douzens* Imprison'd and Fin'd by that *House*, and yet not one *Presbyterian* suffer'd all this while, but were *Careless* and *Embraced* as the most *Loyal Subjects* of the Nation. The Conjunction of *Mars* and *Saturn* are by *Astronomers* generally reputed to have very Dangerous Influence on *mundane Affairs*; and yet it never produc'd half those ill Effects in *England*, as the long Conjunction of the *House of Commons* and the *Presbyterians* in the late *Kings* Reign. But now I hope *Jupiter* in the *Ascendant*, our present Sovereign's Great Courage and Conduct, together with the most Honourable *House of Lords*, having the Experience of their *Fathers* and their own *Calamities* at that time, will always obstruct the like Influence for the Future, if ever the same Conjunction happens in our *Dayes*; which *God* in his Goodness forbid. In the Interim, my Lord, I am Your most obedient Servant,

D. M.